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# The Avenues of Social and Economic Empowerment for Women in Ghana's Poor Urban Settlements

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**The Avenues of Social and Economic Empowerment for Women in Ghana's Poor Urban Settlements.**

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS  
in  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by **[Amoah Comfort]**  
November 20, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

APPROVED:

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Capstone Advisor

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MAIS Director

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Date

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## **Dedication**

To God be the glory, this work is dedicated to women everywhere who are making headlines in the media, achieving their dreams, those who have passed on with great accomplishments as well as our historical mothers who forget discrimination, inequality, oppression, and colonialism to redefined our society, breaking down the machismo and patriarchal mentality and world and to those who are causing change in their own small ways. Not forgetting the men and women who are fighting for the inclusiveness of women in the decision-making process and to those who are silently struggling through advocacy and activism to make this a reality. To our mothers and sisters who work tirelessly in deplorable and discriminatory environments. Also my family especially my mother Gifty Dora Enti, brother Josiah Joe Acheampong-Bradshaw and sister Sarah Owusuwaa Bradshaw for their motivation, support, and hard work as well as inspiring my work and career through their during struggles and pain. Words cannot express my love and appreciation to you.

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Dr. Jeffrey Paller

Professor of the African studies and MAIS Department

University of San Francisco

Mr. Innocent Adamadu

Social worker and local Governance expert, Ghana

Late Mr. Kumah

Political activist Old Fadama, Ghana

My appreciation also goes out to all who contributed directly and indirectly to this research.

## **List of Abbreviation**

AWDP	Ashaiman Women's Progressive Development
CEO's	Chief Executive Officer
COHRE	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
CPP	Convention People's Party
GHABHA	Ghana Beautician and Hairdressers Association
MP	Member of Parliament
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO's	Non-Governmental Organization
NPP	National Patriotic Party
OFADA	Old Fadama Development Association
RUWACDA	Northern Women and Child Development Association
SDI	Slum Dweller International
SEND-Ghana	Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa-Ghana
SIP	Slum Improvement Project
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Slum emergence over the years has been as a result of urbanization, which is fast growing in both developed and developing countries. More than 90% of future population growth will be accounted for by the large cities in the developing countries creating more slums. In the developing world, Africa has experienced the highest urban growth during the last two decades at 3.5% per year and this rate of growth is expected to hold till 2050. Projections also indicate that between 2010 and 2025, some African cities will account for up to 85% of the population. This rapid influx has changed Africa's demographic landscape. Yet, urbanization in Africa has resulted in a proliferation of slums, urban poverty, and rising inequality, even though it has also somehow been a positive influence. Inequality in African cities remains the second highest in the world with an average Gini coefficient of about 0.58, well above the average of 0.4. Rural-urban migration and natural population growth rates in cities are the major causes of the increasing rate of urban growth and slum creation in Africa. It is however the belief that Africa, with its relatively rapid rate of urbanization, will in future also be part of what Toynbee has called the 'world city' or 'ecumenopolis' according to Doxiadis with the majority of the world's population then living in a network of urban centers (Songsore, 2000a).

Throughout history, slums have been viewed as impoverished places with a lot of chaos with no opportunity for a better future. Just as suggested by COHRE, "In developed countries, less than 16% of all urban households live in poverty, whereas in the developing nations 41% of all women-headed households live below the locally defined poverty line. This has resulted in over 1 billion poor people living in urban areas without access to adequate shelter or basic amenities (COHRE, 2008)". Research like these have marginalized women and children in such settlements as they explain some of the dangers they face such as

rape, domestic violence, malnutrition, poverty, lack of access to amenities such as good portable water, sanitary facilities, secured shelter, and are prone to diseases as well as lacking a clean environment. Though some of these facts can be said to be true we seem to forget the world is changing and women are revolutionizing, questioning these facts to be true or otherwise in the light of the 21st-century woman. The question now is, are women in slum areas truly marginalized and impoverished with no future whatsoever? The examination of the livelihood of these women will help answer the question of; what are the avenues of social and economic empowerment for women in Ghana's poor urban settlements?

### **1.2 Women in Slum Settlements**

More than enough study has been done on the subject of women in the poor communities of urban cities using approaches of health, female victimization, poverty, resources scarcity, migration issues, coping strategies and livelihoods, land rights and economic issues from a gendered perspective to prove the marginalization of women without stating vividly the power relations and networks of these women in the vicinity creating a gap as it robs readers of the opportunities that might exist. WEDO is one of such that suggests “women in urban communities frequently endure lopsidedly, not just in light of the fact that they are, by and large, poorer than men (three-fifths of the world's one billion poorest individuals are women and young ladies), yet additionally on the grounds that they encounter more noteworthy trouble in getting to assets and administrations custom fitted to their requirements, and basic leadership openings (WEDO, 2003); COHRE also stated “Globally 1 in 3 women has been beaten, forced into sex or otherwise abused. It is reported 10% to 69% of women are physically assaulted by an intimate partner or male... In Mumbai, women are afraid to step out of their houses and homes at night, same as Nairobi, domestic violence is a serious concern in slums (COHRE, 2008 p.34)” depicting women to be poor and vulnerable.

All these approaches have contributed immensely to the different disciplines and body of literature on slum areas. These have failed to provide a concrete answer to the question above

as it has only looked at the livelihood of women in slum areas through the lenses of economic, health and environmental issues, portraying somewhat of a factual picture. As cited by Agei et al in their research, Ziblim asserts “many Kayayei work and sleep at markets places, bus terminals, on streets, or in front of stores, exposing them to the risk of sexual abuse or rape, while others exchange sex for shelter (Ziblim 2013a)” while Porter contradicts, by stating the addition the “livelihoods of migrants in the informal economy contributes to the production, packaging and the distribution of goods and services in the urban informal economy (Porter et al. 2012)”.

I believe change has come and has been a part of our society for so long we fail too often times acknowledge it especially in reference to women related subjects. Women in slum areas are not poverty-stricken and marginalized as it is often depicted, as some have become success stories that are never talked about. Nevertheless, in today’s world debates in the global media landscape, Non-Governmental Organisations, Feminist Advocates and Activists not forgetting the United Nations have been very much focused on achieving gender equality and equity for all mankind changing the picturesque of women that have been created over the years over the vulnerable livelihood of women. Issues on women’s rights are progressing rapidly and gaining attention on the political scenes as policymakers have improved upon the inclusion of women into the decision-making process, thus giving a different account of women in slum area not being poor and without hope, however, there are opportunities lurking around for those who have the courage and tenacity to grab it and better their lives in poor neighborhoods or urban centers. This study will add to empirical data especially to the political and economic disciplines that already exists by changing some misconceptions of the livelihood of women in slum communities as well as creating the awareness on the power and economic relations and dynamics in these neighborhoods.

### **1.3 Approach To Study**

In order to prove this assertion, the study will employ the use of a framework in its methodology that examines;

- a) The social networks of these women in their various communities, how they came to be and how they rely on and help each other as well as the benefits of these networks especially in climbing up the political and economic ladder in their neighborhoods?
- b) The economic and political opportunities available; are these opportunities existing for women, what are the hierarchies of these in the community, how does a woman venture into politics and business, credit facilities and funding available for these opportunities?
- c) The role of men and women in the political agenda of women; Are men and women in support of their fellow women in the political fight? as not all men and women are in favor of having a woman as a political head or leader due to personal, cultural and religious beliefs.

Structuring the research employed the use of interviews and focus group discussions that tailored the questionnaires that were used during the interview process along the lines of the framework to aid in examining the livelihood of these women in the poor settlements of urban centers. Since the study was on the livelihood of women that did not limit it only to women but also employed the use of men respondents as well as traditional council members and some political heads in the community not forgetting the women non-governmental agencies to approach the research.

The structure used proved to be fruitful as it revealed a shocking revelation of the contribution of men in the success stories of these women, especially in the political arena. Often times it has been portrayed men have and are against their counterparts participating in political matters as well as leadership, but in the study, it was realized that some men in the settlements supported and encouraged women despite the financial as well as family challenges and disapproval of some men and women through the political journey. Non-

governmental agencies in one area also proved to have done a tremendous job of training women in public speaking, advocacy, human rights issues, handcrafts, financial and computer literacy as well as the right of political accountability as against the other, which went a long way in aiding the minute portion of women who sought a political career. Furthermore, social networks were an important asset to possess for business women and political aspirants as it paved way for individuals to fraternize with certain members of the society who they would have otherwise never have come in contact with without the aid of their various networks. These networks demonstrated a level of authority and power in their area of business and their impact on social relations.

These findings were somewhat shocking as they depicted a different narrative of what other literature and scholars have published. The study debunked the misconceptions while educating us on the opportunities that exist in the slum as well as the participation of women in slum areas globally, feeling the vacuum other studies have failed created with regards to women being vulnerable and impoverished in slum settlements. just as the media and analysts speak about the ever-growing groups and agencies projecting the need for women empowerment on the global level, women in slum areas are not forgotten as they are making headway too and should be celebrated just as the global ones making waves. I believe more women will begin to take up more leadership mantles economically and politically and the evolution of the status quo will be more evident in a decade or two to come in these settlements.

To uncover the tremendous story the study tells, the study is portioned into five parts, with the introduction as the first, giving a summary of the study followed up by the different approaches and existing studies that have been written by many scholars, this section is grouped the gendered section, the social networks, political and economic as well as the history of the politics in the global south as it tells a story of how empowerment started and

how it has come to be in the African context though using Ghana as a case study. We further provide the methods that were used on the field in examining the study, producing the data that was derived. In order to assist readers to digest the findings from the field, an in-depth analysis was done to aid prove the study is applicable to similar cases that exist and finally providing empirical contributions and recommendations of what can be fixed as well as how.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Migration is not a new phenomenon, as people have moved from one place to the other over the years in search of fertile land for farming purposes, work, better livelihoods, education, social amenities, from harsh cultural practices, wars, climate change and even from harsh dictatorship regimes, leading to the creation of slums settlements. Slums have been in existence since time immemorial and have spread like wildfire, prompting the need for researchers to investigate the causes and effects of these settlements as well as the ascribing factors. Rapid urbanization, deteriorating infrastructure and limited facilities to deal with the needs of the growing population in many countries around the world have resulted in the creation of slums. Urbanization according to many scholars is the major cause of the emergence of slum settlements, which to some extent is true.

The rise of slum settlements cuts across all societies and countries regardless of being a developed or developing state or as Wallerstein refers to them as periphery, semi-periphery and core states. According to the United Nations Organization Habitat, “there are about one billion people living in the slum areas while just 6% of the population in cities of developed countries live in slum environments. The populace of these areas makes up a shocking 78.2% of the urban residents in less developed countries (Davis 2006a; UN-Habitat 2003; 2006; UNFPA 2007).” Slum dwellers may not be as impoverished and exclusive in state affairs as it is commonly reported by researchers who often study these spaces and the daily activities of these settlers. There has been to some extent a truth and misconception of livelihoods of the people that find themselves in these neighborhoods. To better understand the issue, first a slum needs to be defined, a slum household by the United Nations Habitat, consist of a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack robust housing that shields them against extreme climate conditions have insufficient living space, without easy

access to safe and affordable water and face the risk of evictions complimented with the deficiency of adequate sanitation, be it in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a number of people (United Nations Habitat 2003, 2006).

Ghana is a country located in the West part of the African Continent with a number of these settlements. Accra, a business hub and capital of Ghana, is faced with the issue of slums due to the influx of citizens and foreigners in the region for socio-economic advancements and other reasons. Likewise, Ngai states in his book the impossible subjects, relate to the same reasons why people in Ghana migrate from rural centers to the urban centers. Urban Ghana is rapidly evolving due to the quest for employment opportunities, gender discrimination in rural areas, better livelihood, educational advancements, and better health care. African urban communities, for example, Accra and numerous others have not been saved either as the stream of outside capital and ventures have set the phase for these urban areas to exist and work with the convergence of the country's assets inadvertently into these areas. In Ghana the magnitude of people that lived in urban areas from 1921 to 2000 increased from 7.8% to 43.8%, this is expected to rise to 63% by 2025 (Owusu, 2005;2010).

## **2.2 Gendered Slums**

In the past, most women were seen to have moved from their towns or villages into the cities to join their husbands but in today's world it is a different trend, as women are migrating with the reason of finding a better livelihood for themselves and in some cases flee due to tribal and cultural practices or discrimination. In Ghana the women move to Accra for mostly better economic opportunities, as they flee from the oppressive forms of lives their cultures enforce on them; such as early child marriages, trokosi systems, disinheritance and other harsh living conditions, for example, widows in the Northern part of Ghana who have been disinherited of their land and property by in-laws, caused a rift between them, leading to the choice of migrating to Accra to start a new life (COHRE, 2008).



The Volta Region of Ghana is no different as females affected by the trokosi system are fleeing. This practice is an infringement of their human rights and prevents them from having a life, as they are bound to a shrine forever with only a case of death serving as a form of separation and end of the abuse. These ladies are allowed no education or social life. A study conducted by Nii et al (2015) in Nima, came in contact with a number of females that gave testimonies of leaving their homes and families in the Volta Region and moving to Accra to avoid having to serve in the shrines of their various communities as the wife of the shrine and priest. The only way out is to escape to the city as it looks promising with the indication being of returners looking prosperous on their homecoming to the village. Without knowing what some of these females face in the urban centers and the kinds of jobs they are engaged in, they follow with the hope of a better life and prospects.

Most studies tell the story of poor and disadvantaged slum dwellers especially with respect to the female gender, giving an account of the different abuses, hardships, and susceptibilities of these women and what they face in their day to day life in these communities. Masika is one of such scholars who submit, that female-headed households are more likely to be tenants or sharers than owners, whilst a study in Bangladesh found that female-headed households and supported households were concentrated in the poorest and potentially most vulnerable housing conditions but Owusu et al (2014) disagrees with this assertion as he gives the impression that slums are not just places of despair and misery, but where migrants are enthusiastically making the most of their abilities to move out of poverty, despite the apparent difficulties. Most of these female migrants make enough to cater for themselves and send some home as illustrated by Agei, et al (2015) in their research, that 50.1 % of remitting '*kayeyi*' send remittances by friends or relatives journeying up north, a proportion of (38.9 %) sends money or goods (imported rice, clothes, soap etc.) by trusted bus drivers despite risks

involved, while a small proportion (5.6 %) remits by ‘mobile money’ (via the mobile phone) to their families in the same location (Agei, Kumi & Yeboah, 2015).

Henceforth, the prerequisite for a more nuanced understanding of the linkages between the movement of the deprived to cities and the impacts it is having on their long-term projections moving out of poverty is needed. According to the many studies done, there is somewhat a lack of a clear explanation of what the word means as used in the context. Vulnerability as explained by Berg “looks at the risks and shocks people face, gain insight in the strategies people use to insure themselves against risks and to cope with stresses and shocks, defencelessness and insecurity indicate peoples’ vulnerability” (Berg, 2007). Though these vulnerabilities may exist, Paller shares a dissimilar insight of the situation on the ground in the same and comparable neighborhoods as a means of votes’ for political parties in this region giving these people power, paving way for their voices to be heard. As he elaborates “each social network has a leader who serves as the local strongman; this leader is a political entrepreneur who competes for power in the community but has a network with state administrators and political parties which are personal in nature with strength being determined by the number of followers a leader has” (Paller, 2015).

This new venture has changed slum dwellers discourse as dwellers are provided with the opportunities of rising into politics and gaining some sort of influence in the communities as they take part in the decision-making process and serves as a leader who has the capacity to mobilize his neighbors for political purposes. The political opportunities in these neighborhoods serves as an eyeopener as it presents new data on the livelihoods of citizens in these communities in Ghana but leaves us in the dark as we are unable to tell if these opportunities are gender holistic or just gender bias in the sense that it speaks for both men and women or only to the males in these societies. We are blinded by the fact that these women are living in impoverished areas, thus have no interest in leadership roles but,

according to Beall, these women fear that if they confine themselves to organizing self-help and survival strategies they will be left to manage communities on their own, without resources or political and professional support (Beall 1995a.) since women and men often take up the same issues but look at them in gendered ways as Beall suggests in her research.

When will the script flip and the discourse transform and begin to look for the opportunities women in such communities are presented with and stop analyzing their situation through the lenses of the dominant male patriarchal system where the male figure rules and the female is the subordinate and subject to harsh treatments such as rape, domestic violence and gender-based violence as suggested by COHRE (2008) in their study of the livelihoods of these women as slum dwellers on a global scale. Not to dispute the fact of these findings but to draw the attention of scholars and the public to assess the situations inversely. Masika seems to share a different view and depicts that the role of women at the grassroots or community level is also becoming better valued by external agencies with several case studies showing the active involvement of women in community organizations are more effective, for instance, the Integrated Slum Improvement Programme in Visakhapatnam (India); demonstrates settlements that were led by women that the rhetoric of urban community development has most closely been translated into reality (Masika et al, 1997: P13), thus proposing the need for women in community-building.

### **2.3 Social Networks**

Women in these communities have bonded over the years of their stay and become relatives. They share ideas, problems and sometimes resources with each other, thus forming small groups which later go a long way to impact their lives and communities. As proposed by Desai (1991) in her publications, there is a need to analyze and appreciate the strategies these individuals come up with through their local networks in acquiring resources for their localities and examine the potential of institutions who work at the grassroots to ensure the effective utilization of resources that are available on the outside. Beall, also asserts that

women's organizations can often network at the national and international levels more effectively than within the city, whether at the local, national or international level. Experience suggests that it is primarily the organizational influence of women which guarantees that political parties take seriously the power of the female vote (Beall,1996). As suggested by Paller, slums have become a haven of vote accumulation by politicians. Every slum settlement in Ghana has a representative of the dominant political parties; National Patriotic Party - NPP and the National Democratic Congress –NDC. A recent journal by Ghanaweb (2017) issued an article of market women in the Ashaiman municipality mobbing the Member of Parliament(MP) for the area as he paid them a visit. “Prior to the 2016 general election, the market women on countless occasions appealed to the Municipal Authorities and Ernest Norgbey the NDC Parliamentary aspirant at the time, to provide them with a befitting area for a market where they could ply their trade without interferences”. Women in Ashaiman seized the opportunity and got their voice heard, demanding for what was due them, showing how social networks can go a long way in affecting one’s life, giving an inverse account of women in slum areas being weak or vulnerable.

Women in different societies are challenging the status quo and demanding gender equality and empowerment, why should it be any different in slum areas? These areas I believe may be facing the same evolution of fighting for their voice to be heard and be a part of the decision making process whiles empowering themselves. This cannot be possible without the building of social networks, both formal and informal. As described by Fabian an anthropologist in Tania Murray Li (1996) book on indigenous frontiers, “voice is not just a matter of speaking or acting up but by a matter of making networks that intensify a protest, draws in partners and creates impetus”, meaning for these women to influence the decisions that impact their communities and livelihoods the need for building social networks is key to their success stories of influence. Fraternizing with political figures seems not to be an issue

as their votes are needed by political aspirants who want to secure certain positions in government, creating an opportunity for favors and deals to be made and finalized. Some of these women are leaders in the various fields of their work like the market women's associations and the portage business locally referred to as “*Kakeyi*” (a term used to describe the Portage system in Ghana, which is classified under the informal sector, where females from the ages of 10 upwards carry loads of stuff for shop owners, shoppers, and market women from one destination to another for a fee), while others are leaders in their various communities and serve as *mothers* who offer advice, jobs, and housing for newbies who enter their locality.

## **2.4 Economic Opportunities**

Scherrer states Traders’ associations serve as forms of occupational representation with varying degrees of political as well as an economic influence (Scherrer, 2013). These associations in Ghana are typically a collective group of individuals having shared goals, objectives, trade, issues and concerns with bureaucratic leadership and democratic rule. Studies on particularly women traders’ organizations, in general, have attempted to understand the influence of traders over marketing chains as well as their political power beyond the marketplace, as such works have been instrumental in bringing to light not only the challenges of informal economy workers but also the potential of emerging organizational forms to change their political landscape and to direct the blame away from the traders towards policymakers (Scherrer, 2013). These networks in Ashaiman has led to the formation of grassroots organizations like the AWDP- Ashaiman Women’s Progressive Development, educating the women on human rights issues and also serving as a front for demanding political accountability. The bond of some of these women in their various communities according to Korzh has “led to the development of organizations to deal with environmental-related issues and microfinance. However, despite the importance of these organizations and the important issues they engage, their work often stays invisible in mainstream development

circles and is not written too much about(Korzh, 2015)”. However, as described by Lindell, the social networks and “informal economy organizations are ‘scaling up’ as political actors, using a variety of actions and formal structures to claim their rights to livelihood (Lindell, 2010)” The same goes with the market women associations that have leaders termed as queen-mothers and known in Akan as “*Ohemaa*”, who represent their association in the market, political and economic deals, they also serve as the mediators in settling disputes and negotiating with farmers for prices of farm produce.

As it has been insinuated by scholars and foreigners of slum settlements, females in these settings are poverty-stricken, as research by COHRE, depicts that “in the developing nations 41% of all women-headed households live below the locally defined poverty line. (COHRE, 2008)”, yet these women own properties in their home regions and are operating small and large scale businesses in their communities and elsewhere, proving their economic capability. Though some of these businesses are classified as informal, “women’s participation in this sector has also been noted to promote entrepreneurial dynamism that has the latent power to generate employment and economic growth as well as income in meeting their basic needs (Debrah, 2007)” livelihood portfolios of these young girls play a crucial role in supporting local economic development through addressing market transportation gaps, assisting in market exchange as well as contribute to the generation of local revenue to city authorities in financing development initiatives in the city of Accra. As cited by Ali Tripp in her book, “86% of the population work in the informal sector (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013)” who are engaged in numerous trades that deal with food processing, agricultural production, clothes making, bead making, wood crafts and the like.

## **2.5 Political Opportunities**

Political power has been seen to go hand in hand with economic influence. Most political activities take money one way or the other to be able to access other needed resources. But that has not always been the case for women, as their “necessary economic functions both

inside and outside the home have long been undervalued, partly because of the whole concatenation of magico-religious thought which declared women to be polluting agents unfit to participate in public decision as it is seen in many societies, as with the ‘Ga’ – an ethnic group in Ghana, most women have always worked outside the home but have still been considered by men to be inferior and consequently blocked from having authority over men (Robertson, 1994)”. Kameri-Mbote and Kibwana also share the same view that “patriarchy and cultural subordination of women have ensured that women rarely offer themselves as candidates”. Though this assertion is valid the norm is changing, an article on the Government of Ghana webpage, quotes Mr. Osei Kyei Mensah Bonsu a Parliamentary Affairs Minister-designate seeking for an equal gender inclusiveness in the Nation’s governance, he further went on to say, “It does appear that our women folks are not finding space in parliament, together we have to work on that (Ankrah, 2017)”

The need for the integration of women into the decision-making process is becoming an increasing phenomenon for both the male and female population including those in slum settlements. Some men in Old Fadama and Ashaiman are pushing for the inclusion of women in community and governance positions as well, as their organizing and leadership skills have proven to work over the years. “One of the other barriers, which occurs on the way to organizing, is women’s lack of knowledge or skills. Here help comes from many NGOs who are gaining literacy development and overcome this barrier (Elson & Jain, 2011)”, though true to some extent, with the help of the AWPD and other NGO’s in the community of Ashaiman, women are taught how to speak in public, human rights law, governance, and economic skills. This has led to incremental growth of women in the political sphere; such as competing for the Assemblyman/woman of the community as well as positions of the various National Parties (NPP & NDC), instead of the female organizer which is delegated only to women. Likewise, in Old Fadama, women are much more open to mobilizing both men and

women to address issues, be it political, economic, environmental, educational, cultural or social before handing the rings over to a trusted male leader.

Maria Nzomo gives the impression that “in the arena of political decision-making, for instance, studies have shown that if women are represented in large enough numbers, of at least 30-35% of all members of parliament, they could make significant change to dominant male political culture by putting more emphasis on such fundamental policy issues as gender equity, social justice, the environment, childcare and violence against women (Nzomo,1993)”. “During the 2016 Ghana political campaign, the now President, Nana Akuffo-Addo, promised to increase women in governance to 30% since women make up a large portion of the population. As reported by Ghanaweb, he has achieved 27% of his initial promise by 2017 (Ghanaweb, 2017)”. The inclusion of these women in politics has evolved as more women are being presented with the opportunity to partake in the decision-making process. Since the time of Independence, the struggle for inclusion in local and national decisions is evident as women have risen to positions such as Supreme Court Judge, Electoral Commissioner, ministerial positions as well as CEOs’ of multi-billion companies which were often men dominated. This does not just apply to Ghana but is evident worldwide as women over the years have ventured into industries and disciplines that were often viewed as spaces for men. The woman in this scenario depicts strength, leadership and mobilization skills, who knows how to demand accountability and not an impoverished, vulnerable individual who has been excluded from the decision-making process waiting upon a man to act and demand their collective rights.

## **2.6 Women journey into Governance in the Global South**

Women the Global South have been known to face many obstacles when it comes to the level of governance in many African countries. During the pre-colonial times, this was the same trend but women were enstooled as Chiefs and Queen-mothers to help discuss problems of women in the community as well as serve as representation in terms of women mobilization



and organization for various events. Historians have since the 1800s and early 1900s referred to Nana Yaa Asantewaa of the Ashanti kingdom of Ghana as a politician who fought for equality, she was enstool as a queen mother by her brother Nana Akwasi Afrane Okpese to participate in decisions taken that affected the individuals in the community and is particularly known as the warrior who fought against the British during the battle for the “Golden Stool”. There have been many others such as “Iyoba” or Queen Idia of Benin in the 1500s, a position that was instituted by her son in honoring her counsel in militia affairs. This position gave her political privileges that paved the way for other women to climb up the political ladder. Another instance is Queen Ndeta Yalla of Waalo, modern-day Senegal who came from a line of royals and succeeded her sister Ndjeumbeut Mbodj in 1846. She is much remembered due to the bravery and resistance against French rule around the time.

This brief description tells a story of how women were involved in the governance of their nations but sadly this changed after the appearance of “Western Democracy” as women were no longer deemed as good law and decision makers. Though some women did attain the status of lawmakers after independence in some African countries, it was a struggle and not an easy success story. Arhin claims during the fight for independence in Ghana, women took up the role of financiers and even took part in processions and boycotts led by the Convention People’s Party (CPP) as well as the general strike in 1948 (Arhin, 1991). But at the end of the where did their participation lead them in terms of governance? Furthermore, since 1992, women’s representation in Ghana’s Parliament has always been less than 12 percent but much different in the traditional setting as Afisi (ibid.) argues that there was nothing like gender inequality; rather, there were gender complementarities because both men and women played complementary roles in the development of society.

The same goes for the women in Kenya as they participated significantly in the Mau Mau struggle for independence but were sidelined after this. According to Kamari-Mbote et al, despite

the high level of education and number of middle-class women in Kenya, the patriarchal and cultural subordination of women have ensured they rarely offer themselves as political candidates (Kameri-Mbote et al, 1993). Surprisingly Nzomo states the “participation of women in political and public decision making in 1963 and 1969 did not have a woman member in parliament but that changed in November 1969 when the first woman was elected into the National Assembly and another nominated to sit in that august legislature body (Nzomo, 1993)”. Tanzania had an interim quota of elected officials and civic elections in which 15 had to be women, which was a great start to having women representation in parliament but less than a minute quota of the female population in the country. But there have been a few success stories like that of Ex-president Ellen Eugenia Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia who amidst several controversies was sworn in as the 24th president in 2007 and the election of President Ms. Sahle-Work's Zewde of Ethiopia who was also sworn in 2018 as the first female president of her country.

Even in the light of cultural and religious backgrounds that have created stereotypes of where it's a man's duty to drink from the table of politics but inconvenient to have female heads as they are emotional thinkers and not logical thinkers. With the ever-growing education of women, it is still becoming difficult for both men and women especially women to support their fellow gender on their journey to political power as it is cultural unaccepted. Understanding the past and present of these so-called cultures is quite oblique as women in traditional governance decades ago did not face such challenges but women in politics now face such difficulties as it look like the adaptation of western democracy has brainwashed the once able-bodied women who feared nothing and went all out to contribute and be a part of the power relations that took place in the pre-colonial era.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the use of methodological thinking according to Loseke “is critical thinking, it is about analyzing and evaluating not only what you think but also why you think it” (Loseke,2012). This is achieved through the strategies implored by the study of the empirical techniques and the research design and used, such as the population size, sample and sampling procedures, and procedures for data collection. It includes the tool that was used for the collection of data (In-depth interview, focus discussion), data collection technique and Area of study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The methodology is the technical framework within which research is conducted. Kotari (2004) observed that research methodology is not only about the methods used but is also about the logic (the philosophy or principles) behind the methods chosen in the context of the research problem, explaining why a particular method would be suitable for a given research problem and not any of the other methods in that context. This study is purposely to analyze the socio-economic role of women in the participation of decision making in slum settlements of Accra.

#### **3.3 Conceptual Framework**

This is referred to as the hypotheses the researcher develops by building off of what other theorist or scholars have written, on the same subject, these hypotheses assist the research in framing the study in ways that help in explaining and examining the study. In order to explain the discrepancy the avenues of social and economic empowerment for women in Ghana’s poor urban settlements, three hypotheses were used in structuring the study such as;

a) The social networks of these women in their various communities, how they came to be and how they rely on and help each other as well as the benefits of these networks especially in climbing up the political and economic ladder in their neighborhoods?

b) The economic and political opportunities available; are these opportunities existing for women, what are the hierarchies of these in the community, how does a woman venture into politics and business, credit facilities and funding available for these opportunities?

c) The role of men and women in the political agenda of women; Are men and women in support of their fellow women in the political fight? as not, all men and women are in favor of having a woman as a political head or leader due to personal, cultural and religious beliefs.

This aided and guided the research in gathering data to make the argument more comprehensive.

### **3.4 Data Collection Tools and Techniques**

Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions with the help of a structured questionnaire to gather the subjective opinions of the target population. Notes were taken in place of audio recorders during interviews and discussions to prevent uneasiness of correspondents. These are the techniques or instruments that were used for the collection of the data for the research;

### **3.5 Data Source**

Data, as explained by Loseke, are the tracings of the physical and social worlds obtained through the senses (Loseke, 2012) and can be several forms such as primary and secondary;

#### **3.5.1 Primary Data**

This information is obtained directly from the field by the researcher through the use of various techniques; like interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, behavioral studies, observations, recordings, and pictures. For the purpose of the study, interviews, observations and focus group discussions were found to be the most appropriate as it called for a face to face interaction with participants, creating a level of validity and comfort. Also due to the language barrier, this method was most efficient, as questionnaires were translated into the local dialect “*twi*” and “*fante*” providing a smooth flow of interaction and data collection.

### **3.5.2 Secondary Data**

With the diverse views of researchers on this topic, information was gathered from published materials on the same issue and in some cases literature that had contents that were useful to the research but on an entirely different topic was sought. Newspapers, journals, and reports by non-governmental agencies were sought. These materials gave an in-depth analysis and overview of a woman's life in a slum settlement the vulnerabilities and opportunities presented to them by various researchers.

### **3.6 Interviews and Focus Group Discussions**

Due to the nature of the research, interviews were the main technique for data collection as it presented participants and researchers to meet and talk face to face, creating some sort of relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. The questions were grouped politically and economically to narrow down the power and presentation of these women in both disciplines as well as finding out if they are truly marginalized as stated by other researchers.

Questions such as;

- a) What is your role in the community?
- b) What is the hierarchy of power relations in your neighborhood?
- c) What political and economic opportunities are presented to you?
- d) What social relations or networks do you interact with?

These were asked because it guided the conversation and aided in telling a story of the livelihood of these women and how it applied to my research. This technique was the best as it eliminated the language barrier and created room for a zealous interaction. Interviews were mostly held in the participant's house, shop, place of work and public spaces to ease tensions. With the group discussion, it was conducted ranging from groups of 4 to 9 participants to prevent biased information and half-truths. This served as a motivation for some individuals to engage in the discussions. Discussions and interviews were usually between 30 minutes to 2 hours. In fulfillment of the code of research ethics, consent from

participants was sought before participating in the research as such matters as considered sensitive.

### **3.6.1 Interview Guides**

The questionnaire was one instrument and tool in data collection, but due to the language barrier, time constraints and economic ventures participants were engaged in, questionnaires were translated and restructured to fit into interviews and focus group discussions. This technique gave room to interesting and lengthy conversations with participants which a traditional questionnaire would not have been able to achieve. These questions were tailored to address specific issues deriving answers that were geared towards the understanding of the socio-economic livelihoods of women in slum settlements. Since these were directly asked to participants varied answers were received and gathered, providing a reliable narrative of the study and settlement in question.

### **3.7 Community Observation**

Though this study did not apply an ethnographic approach as a technique for data collection, it was somewhat made use of. In the two communities, it was often a habit to observe women and their interactions with surroundings and others once I visited the community. On some occasions, it was noticed market women would engage in political talk with buyers, fellow sellers and sometimes men discussing what they had heard in the news from that morning or night before on the various policies that were presented in parliament for deliberations as well as existing ones. Also, these women though living in poor conditions did not joke around with their economic ventures (market women, '*kayayei*', shop owners, food vendors, hairdressers, and seamstress) they went about their trade with some level of enthusiasm whether rain or shine. To these women, work is one to be played around with.

### **3.8 Sample Size and Sample Selection Processes**

A sample size of 35 participants was interviewed; comprising of women, community leaders, associations heads, political activist, traditional leaders, and political representatives of the NDC and NPP were included in this number. Snowball sampling was the technique that was

used in the participant selection process. Since the community is a close-knit one, contacts on the ground provided respondents that were deemed to be reliable sources, who later on recommended other respondents that proved resourceful to the study.

### **3.8.1 Study Site**

To better understand the subject matter two study sites were chosen due to their diverse nature in population size, geographical locations, land title issues, ethnicity, history, family ties, cost of living, culture, gender inequality, presence of non-governmental organizations, the environment and sanitation issues and the opportunities the communities provided, not to mention the notorious nature of both communities. Though there were some similarities the contrast between the two could not be avoided. Old Fadama is a slum situated in the heart of business hub of Accra the capital city of Ghana and known for its notorious nature, scattered over a small piece of land opposite the Abobologise market and also known as the Konkomba yam market which according to some scholar is a driving factor for overcrowding of the settlement. Ashaiman is also a major slum located in the Tema Municipal area and ethnically diverse. The Tema industrial area seemed to have contributed to the establishment of the settlement resulting in population increase.

These communities were chosen due to the power struggles it depicted in the different areas of the community such as the play for social amenities, land acquisition and ownership and how it affected the representation of women in local politics. Both communities showed different approaches to the involvement of women in the decision-making process, leadership positions, the role women play in the communities together as well as the diverse economic strengths depicted in the different environs played a role in the selection process.

### **3.8.2 Research Population**

Though the research was on the socio-economic opportunities of the empowerment of women in slum areas, some men and community leaders were included in the target population with women aging from 18 years and above being the central focus. These women were either

married, single, widowed, employed, unemployed, literate or illiterate, to help broaden our perspectives on the lives of these women and capture every voice regardless of their current circumstances. Some of these community leaders comprised of assemblymen and women, youth leaders, leaders of associations, political activists, NPP and NDC representatives in the community. The reason for this selection was to find out the different views at the and government level on the empowerment of women not just at the national level but also in these settlements. Also, the view of men in this study was vital, as their role in this can either serve as a source of encouragement and support or obstructions for these women, as it has been proven on numerous occasions that men will rather lead than be led by women especially in the African context.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Data gathered from the field was transcribed first hand on the grounds and grouped under various issues together with other literature that was found on the issue or similar to the issue. The data derived from the different sources were analyzed and put into a group of 3 according to the working hypothesis developed under the theoretical framework.



## Chapter 4

### Findings and Data Analysis

#### 4.1 Introduction

This section presents the outcomes from the fieldwork through the data collection of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as it is very fundamental to the study as it tells the story of these women in settlements. Just as Muwonge suggests “data analysis is one of the fundamental processes in statistical operations. Failure to analyze the collected data from research renders them useless to policymakers and undermines the real advantage of research.” (Muwonge, 2006)

#### 4.2 Description and History of Ashaiman

The research was conducted in Ashaiman and Old Fadama a slum settlement in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, also known as the capital city of the nation. These two settlements were chosen due to their diverse cultural and economic backgrounds as well as their locations and access to resources but have some similarities, such as the marketplaces and business hub surrounding their environs.

Ashaiman though popularly referred to as a slum settlement became a municipality in 2006/2007 with a population of over 75,000 people, 17 electoral areas, 23 Assembly Members and a Traditional Council. The municipality has been known as a slum due to the various slums it has under her wings and the history behind her establishment. The community is located just around the Tema environs, specifically off of the Tema Motorway around the Tema industrial area. This settlement had a first settler, Nii Amui a fisherman and farmer around the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he called the place ‘*Nmpo-Asei*’ Village now known as Official Town, this place became a rest stop for most traders who came to Tema to sell their produce from other places and others who came in search of work in the industrial city. Ashia a friend of Nii Amui who often passed through the village also moved to a footpath further from his friend hence creating the name Ashai Village, which is around where the traditional council

is currently. And Nii Oko another friend of Nii Amui also moved to the present Zeenu which was then called '*Mon-Obaanyl*' meaning if you can come and stay with me.

However, there was a rapid influx of settlers in the community during the construction of the Tema Harbour during the time of Kwame Nkrumah the 1<sup>st</sup> President of Ghana, after British colonialization. Ashaiman became the resting place for workers who commuted to Tema for work during the day and back at night to rest. After the construction, most workers preferred to stay in the township other than returning to their hometowns and villages. This place is now home to a lot of migrants from the different regions of the country but dominated by Ewes and Northerners, who come to the industrial city in search of jobs at the port, industries located in the region and educational opportunities. The settlement has about four slums embedded in it; Tulako, Zeenu, Lebanon, Zongo Laka, Middle East, Jericho, Bethlehem.

In Ashaiman, I had the chance of talking to women from various backgrounds; married, single, young, old, self-employed, migrants, natives, market women, policymakers and leaders who all gave a different account on their opportunities of social and economic empowerment in their community. According to data derived women in this neighborhood were more immersed in the political and economical process, more women had risen to leadership positions, were educated about the political climate not in their community alone but also nationwide, demanded accountability from their leaders depicting a sense of political and economic empowerment as against assertions made by scholars that individuals in such environments are impoverished and to some extent have no access to some resources and opportunities. According to some authorities and participants, there has been a 20% increase in the involvement of women in especially political ventures and accountability. To my surprise, women were contesting for political positions both at the local and national level to change policies and fight for the betterment of their community.

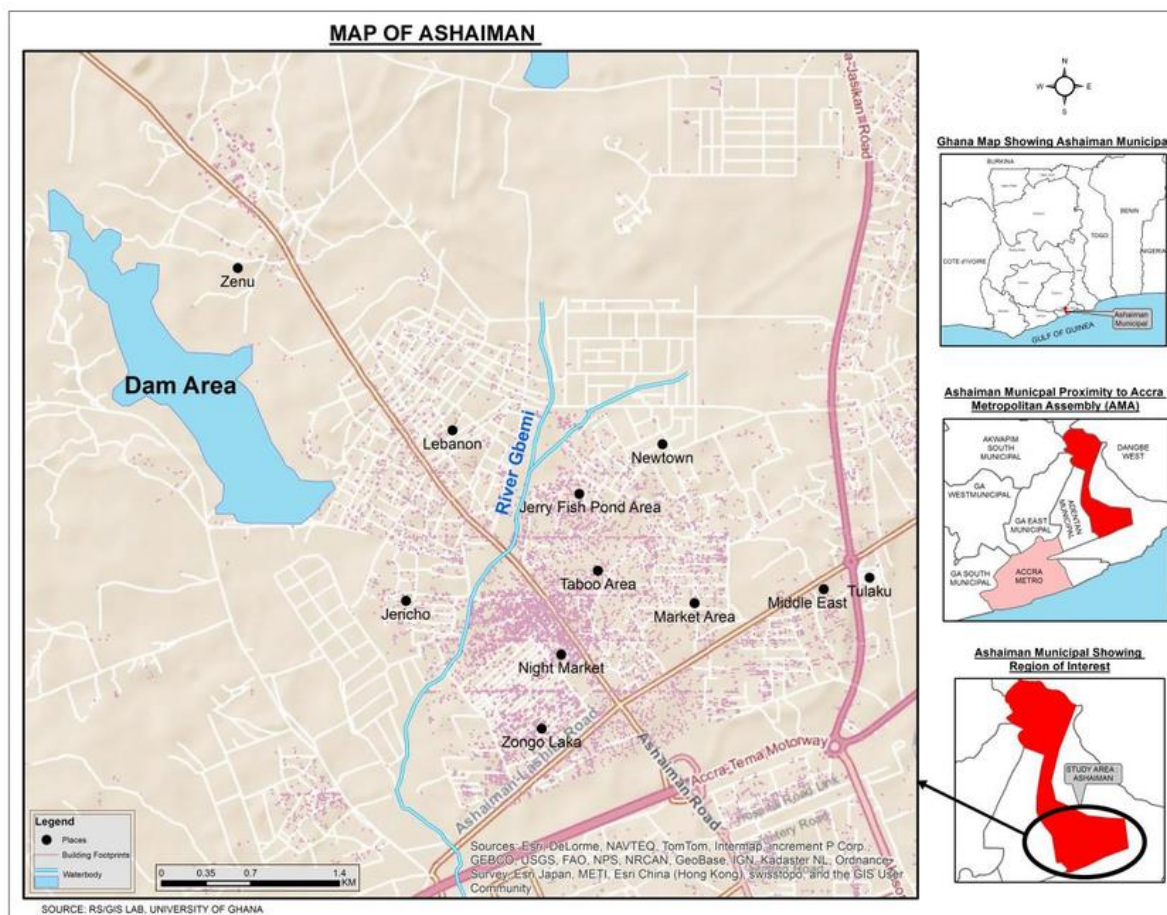


Figure 1. Megan Peloso, Cynthia Morinville 2014. 'Chasing for Water': Everyday Practices of Water Access in Peri-Urban Ashaiman, Ghana

Through the help of some men, this community has been able to push for the inclusion of female leaders thus creating the opportunity for the individuals in question to rise above the normative and change the status quo of having the woman on the sidelines and men at the forefronts. Though the community is culturally diverse with some cultures standing in the opposition of having women as leaders instead of being the homemakers as they are often called, is slightly changing due to educational awareness by some non-governmental agencies, feminist movements, female empowerment advocates and political activists who support the need of women in politics.

#### 4.2.1 Description and History of Old Fadama

Old Fadama is located on the outskirts of the Central Accra Business District, opposite the Agbogbloshie market and home to about 80,000 people. The community referred to as New Fadama was formed as a result of the relocation of the then Old Fadama due to flooding back

in the 1960s and in the 1990s for the construction of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) conference by President Kwame Nkrumah. The community experienced a rise in population as people fled the Konkomba-Nanumba war in the Northern Region of Ghana to the Salaga Timber Market located south of the nation, this contributed to the spring up of the “Konkomba market or Yam market” as usually referred to as. Around 1983 during the repatriation of Ghanaians from Nigeria, most individuals used the place as a point since there was no cost to settling on the land. Due to the swampy nature of the land, it was filled with sawdust from the timber market and coconut husks before temporary structures were put up. As the community grew popular older residence began to take over the land and required payment for structures put up by new migrants.

As a part of the Odododiodio Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, this space is heavily populated by citizens mainly from the Northern part of Ghana, filled with kiosks, wooden and cardboard structures. The site has its different ethnic groups with leaders to address grievances and support to tribal members. Old Fadama since 1900 has been faced with the threat of forced-evictions which have been addressed by community heads, human rights activists, non-governmental agencies and the United Nations agencies who believe individuals in informal settlements have the right to housing, thus promoting the SLUM upgrading projections instead of evictions.



Figure 2. Aerial view of Old Fadama. Timothy Ngenbe, Graphic Online June 2018.

Old Fadama another major slum in the Accra environs is no different, though the women here tell a different story. Women in this settlement for cultural reasons are not as much interested in leadership roles but will manage to organize individuals to cause a change if needed. The populace of this region is largely Northerners from the Northern region of Ghana, where women are deemed incompetent of leading but rather regarded as followers who support and submit to the decisions of their husbands or male head of the home or community. An examination of the cultural practice of this group which is heavily Islamic by religion showed that women have been taught and nurtured to dissuade from partaking in decision making nevertheless politics as well. Cultural norms and practices are ingrained and embedded in our very souls as human beings and to change from that is tantamount to bleeding as culture is a way of life we grow with. Historically this was no different in many nations from the early middle ages till now, where education, economic and political roles and decisions were left to the men as women were not culturally fit to rule a nation, this assertion evolved over time and keeps changing almost every decade. The reign of Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom

during the 1800s, Queen Elizabeth of England, Vigdis Finnbogadóttir of Iceland, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia has displayed this evolution breaking down cultural and religious norms. Though all ethnic groups in the country and other countries have this same cultural practice education over the years have caused a change and women are now venturing into offices that were deemed as men's in our society, true not all cultures have been affected by the educational system and United Nations inclusion of women in the decision making, thus there is still a practice of women should not desire to take decisions either in the family, community-wise or nationally. Through the interviews held it was realized some of the women had no knowledge of the presence of an assemblyman in their neighborhood but were not ignorant of various ethnic leaders in the area who were capable of addressing issues either social, personal, economic or political. This was quite disturbing but according to some male participants, women were a force to reckon with in the mobilization of community people better than their male counterparts. Mostly they preferred to gather and educate their fellow inhabitants on issues and why it needed attention before handing over to a competent male, showing their desire to participate to some extent.

#### **4.3 Reasons for participation**

The main reason for the incessant advocacy of the inclusion of women in governance and the decision-making process is to promote good governance and democracy. Equality is a contributing factor to the desire of women to pursue these roles. Moreover, individuals may have diverse reasons for involving themselves in politics, mostly is to address issues that are affecting women in society. To fully understand the study and why women should be inclusive in politics were to have a vivid perspective of the reasons for the desire of these women. From the interviews, it was gathered some were interested due to the experiences and injustices they have suffered and still suffering so as to make policies that change them. As stated by the participants, the fight for political inclusion is to address issues such as the

harassment women face in the workplace in terms of securing a job or getting a promotion in exchange for sexual favors.

“In our world today some managers look at a woman’s body and not their cv to give them a job. You are sometimes pressured or threatened to provide your superior with sexual favors to get or secure your job. Likewise, in the tertiary schools too where some pretty girls have had to fight off or give in to perverts so as not to get a bad grade”.

#### Respondent Interview

This is no news in African countries as women and female students have discussed issues of where an employer or lecturer wanted sexual favors in exchange for a job, promotion or grades. This has become a concern as a portion of the society looks only at the beauty and not the qualifications of the individual in question to determine their competence for a job or grade. As public institutions, media and the government has failed to address this openly, these women engaged in the political fight since policies can only be made at the top and is done by so few people who are mostly men and not feel or understand the pain of these women. Others are also interested in changing policies as well as using their political office as a platform to raise the awareness of domestic violence and rape, which are subjects that governmental policies seem to pay less attention to, causing these crimes to be silenced. Culture appears to be an influence on the silence as it has been normalized with the blame put on the female gender.

Likewise, a female who is raped is at fault for not being discreet in her choice of clothing and was blamed for enticing the offender and leading him on. I gathered the above reasons were of much concern to female aspirants. For others, they wanted to create a safe environment for their children since a slum settlement is regarded as unsafe for inhabitants to live in. Resource provision and recognition are vital to the security of their homes and



businesses. Most aspirants that were self-employed were also concerned with the policies that affect their business particularly market traders who complained about how the importation of some goods into the country affected their prices and collapsed their businesses.

#### **4.4 Male Patriarchal system**

Since the Biblical days and the Greek Empire, men have been said to be in political power and perceived as the head of the household and ones in authority, creating the male-dominated political and economic arena where a woman is deemed incapable of policymaking as they are emotional beings and not logical homo-sapiens who can make critical decisions when necessary. Furthermore, “there are some deliberate measures that the dominant groups take in order to perpetuate the ideology and maintain the status quo, which include cultural practices and artistic works that women should naturally know their place. They should know should accept the obvious that men are the thinkers, philosophers, scientist, politicians, breadwinners, and spirituals while they, on the other hand, are home-makers, are submissive dependents, artists, workers and mothers of the nation.” (Wanjiku et al, 1993). At one point in our society, the female gender was not allowed to vote, work neither given the right to education as it was said to be a waste of one’s investment as their duty was to make babies, care for their husbands, cook, clean and make themselves beautiful as they were the representation of the male figure in the home, but with the societal change for the empowerment of the “weaker sex” as mostly referred to as, the male gender is increasingly faced with the circumstance of maintaining their power in the “male-dominated” society. Historically in Ghana after independence educating the girl-child was rather viewed as a waste of one’s money, thus the boy-child was highly preferred leading to the popular saying of Dr. Kwegyir-Aggrey, “if you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate a nation” during the early 1900s in the struggle for the girl-child education. Furthermore, women in Iceland after much struggle were allowed to vote and contest for political office between 1914 and 1915(World Economic Forum, 2018).



According to an article by Andrew Glass in the politico, women in the United States of America legally attained the rights to vote in 1920 which had been a long-lasting issue for women and the country (Glass, 1920). For instance, as cited by Tetteh et al, a girl respondent of Warrington's and Kiragu's (2012: 305) study among primary school girls in Kajiado District in Kenya said that "... if there was insufficient money for both her and her brother to attend school, her father would make her stay at home and would prioritize schooling for her brother"

As stated by Wanjiku, "the stage for gender stereotyping names clearly defined the place of women in a man's world. This stereotyping names a perfect material reality which helps to reinforce the social and economic conditions within which they are developed and employed." (Wanjiku et al, 1993). However, women are climbing up the educational and economic ladders while demanding accountability from their leaders as young women in the community were striving and pushing to enter into the secondary and tertiary levels of education, most female students ranging from 15 years and above were seen to be in school on the weekday and helped out with parents with chores and their businesses on the weekends. Testimonials from respondents were proof of the majority of young women who had completed the secondary school moved on to the tertiary level as compared to their male counterparts, some also had secured scholarships to study in western educational institutions to pursue a masters in their field which was rather peculiar since there was an increment in the education of women as against men. Women who had obtained educational, political and economic achievements served as mentors to the young and inexperienced ones why it was important to take these seriously. Also, it realized women were booming and expanding in the line of trade and businesses by acquiring new skills and knowledge on how to run their businesses no matter how small it was. Credit unions around the vicinity expanded as women sought out loans to expand and start businesses.

The urgency to remind leaders on campaign promises and the distribution of social amenities were not taken lightly as well as questioning Assembly members, District Chief Executives and Members of Parliament on physical projects that commenced in the community, this was a clear indication of exercising their rights as members of the community. We are no longer in the age where females sat back and watched their male counterparts make all the decisions without question. All over the world, from the grassroots to the highest form of governance there has been campaigns of new policies that are female inclusive and empowering in order to change the narrative that depicts we are in a “man’s world” and therefore the man should be at the forefront and “women the housewives and child bearers”.

#### **4.4 Challenges of Women in Leadership Roles**

Women seemed to be facing some difficulties pursuing their political careers. Data gathered from interviews that were conducted gave a vivid description and breakdown of the challenges they encounter and reasons for the nonparticipation as well as answering the question of what are the socio-economic avenues of empowerment for women in slum settlements? These challenges are expanded below;

##### **4.4.2 Political Funding**

Monetary issues have also become an obstacle in the realization of some women in partaking in these positions as they want to be independent of ambitious men who are only willing to invest their resources for their gain and favors and not that of the female aspirant. Just as suggested by Richard et al the “ rich people can buy off politicians by paying for the costs of their American political campaigns as the campaigns cost a lot of money and they are not publicly funded...also it was recognized that particular groups are much better politically represented in Washington than others, such as large banks like J. P. Morgan, auto manufacturers like General Motors, or software manufacturers like Microsoft, are well represented by Washington lobbyists or have easy access to policymakers when they want it

as compared to the poor and unorganized who lack voices in the Washington conversation”.

(Valley)

“At one point in my campaign I remember boarding a *“trotro”* and was compelled by the passengers to pay for their transportation, they seemed not to care whether I could afford it or not, it was one of the hassles I had to deal with. At the time my money was not enough, I had to plead with the mate to permit me to send him the money through money mobile after getting home. Venturing into politics is not as easy as it looks, it puts a strain on one’s finance especially for someone like me coming from slum settlement. The boys were always at my doorstep with the expression, ‘nothing for the boys today’ madam’ just because they went around mobilizing more votes for me. Gaining victory as a woman, I am glad I can impact my community and serve as a mentor for my fellow women, the journey is difficult but worth the hassle to cause a change in our society.”

Participant interview

Economically women in this settlement seem to be somewhat financially stable but are fiscally competent to handle some of these positions as they are resource consuming especially for the female as she has to work twice as hard to enable her victory. In Old Fadama women were seen to be economically vibrant by the manner in which they attend to their businesses and trade, also some demonstrated to have acquired properties in their various hometowns and prospering business though the settlement is a swampy area with cardboard and plywood as materials for shelter depicting a very penurious community with women at the center. Likewise, women in this settlement are also unwilling to aspire for positions due to the strenuous nature of it, the financial burden and also the insults and perceptions that come with it.

“Even though I am a single mother I am also an established businesswoman who trades in and out of Ghana. I started out as a polling agent for the 2008 elections and

advanced to the female organizer of the NDC. I went a step further and contested for the Assemblywoman position in 2010 but lost this did not discourage me, I tried again in 2017 and emerged as the winner against my opponent who was a man. During the process, my business came crashing down as I no longer paid much attention to it and depended on it as my main source of finance for the campaign because I decided not to rely on anyone for financial support in order not to owe them political favors after my appointment into office as their vision for the community was mostly different than mine. Running a campaign is very money oriented as one has to print posters, do dawn broadcasting and sometimes I have to give money to the various youth leaders to mobilize more votes for me.”

Participant interview Ashiaman

However, the monetary plight of some of these women running for office was minimized by the help offered by some political advocates by printing posters, providing platforms where the female aspirants were able to present the community with the vision they had should they emerge victors. The provision of these males did not come with attached strings different from the vision of the aspirant. The Ashaiman Womens’ Progressive Development deserves accolades for the tremendous work it is doing by impacting the livelihoods of women and impacting them but it is unable to support these women with resources during their campaign periods because the organization is not monetary competent to provide such assistance, since is an organization in the community geared at providing women with the necessary skills in empowering them such literacy skills, computer skills, public speaking, financial skills, organizing handcraft workshop for women, advocacy skills and others. The organization is not financially stable to take up the mandate of financing all the women that engage in the political journey though they do encourage women to join the political fight.

#### 4.4.3 Labeling

According to the testimonials of women in positions in Ashaiman, it was not easy attaining the power they now have as the society they live in perceived such women as proud and pompous who will do anything to climb up the social ladder. In our society, a woman's ability is equated to her biological nature and not her capabilities creating the impression that a woman is not proficient enough to handle certain affairs, an ideology built of off myths which depict the belief that the "woman's nature is the place of the kitchen, women are weak, inferior, hold babies better, are gentle by nature, are not ambitious, are kind among other unscientific. These statements are preceded with opening statements such as 'I think women are like this....' no they are made as a statement of fact, which are socially constructed myths that go towards strengthening gender difference and justifying oppression of women." (Wanjiku et al, 1993). These ideologies are what have led to the labeling of women who embark on political agendas, making the whole process an abomination for some. A participant had this to say

"During my campaign for Assemblywoman, I was insulted and called names like "*Ashawo*" meaning prostitute by fellow females and men to discourage me from running for the office, some individuals told me to stand aside because it was a man's job and field, and a woman like me should be in the kitchen and home taking care of husband and children."

A participant in Ashaiman

A look of women over the years have come to have the opinion that a woman that participates in politics is a prostitute who sleeps her way to the top. It has been believed that women have offered sexual favors to men in positions who hold power so as to have access to power and authority which is said to be true in some cases, therefore those who have risen to managerial, CEO's and political positions have not all resulted in this method as most have succeeded in achieving the heights and accomplishments they now have. Many women due to

this perception shun the political platform until a few a century ago with just a few despite these perceptions making a bold step like this participant to be a part of the decision-making circle. Also a woman's duty has been to take care of the home, husband and children and so for a woman to overstep her boundaries and partake in politics is deemed an abomination by some citizens both educated and uneducated. Especially being a single woman or mother contesting for a political position or a higher position in a their place of work is misjudged and labelled as a prostitute who slept her way through to the top. A part of the society only looks at the biological set up of a woman and not her qualifications and skills, thus these women pay the price of verbal abuse from their fellow women and men as well.

I came to understand some women are in the opposition of their colleagues engaging in politics as it is a man's world due to the cultural setting they find themselves in and how the society has structured gendered roles of who can do what and who can not. Women for a period of time have come to believe this normative and embraced the patriarchal system that has pushed the woman into the shadows supporting the notion of the man being the logical and critical thinker and the woman as the emotional thinker who should not be permitted to make decisions especially outside the home. Moreover, this is an irony as ancient Africa once upon a time had females engage in these same subjects, such as Queen Nefertiti, Queen Hatshepsut who rose from Queen mother to Pharaoh, Cleopatra VII who showed great leadership skills in a male-dominated area as well Queen mother and warrior Yaa Asantewaa of the Ashanti dynasty in Ghana (formerly Gold Coast) who led her people in a war against the British for the Golden Stool in 1900. These heroines reformed the narrative, presenting women as a formidable force to reckon with whenever decisions are being made.

One might ask what happened to the African woman? Long before western women began the fight for equality, women in Africa were taking political and economic roles as Queen mothers, traders, and warriors such as Queen Ranavalona of Madagascar, Queen Aminatu

and the Dahomey Amazons of the Kingdom of Dahomey who made judgments that affected the well-being of their communities. This however changed with the arrival of the Europeans to the continent and the role of some of these women gradually faded while the West saw the evolution of females fighting for gender equality some centuries afterward. Now the African society having forgotten her roots accustomed to the ways of the “white man” are now in these same battle of gender equality. These were huge accomplishments that are celebrated thus robbing the female Ghanaian of how the society once viewed women.

“For me, I would rather live in the community quietly and mind my own business than engage in anything that has to do with politics. I don’t want anyone calling me names or insult me just because of a position because I will not let it slide, either am I ready to have people rumor that I am sleeping with some big man or politician to sponsor my political career. It's better to leave such things to the men.”

Participant interview in Old Fadama

The testimonial of this woman is quite typical with most women as it shows her grievance of the challenges of women in politics but it takes courage to preserve. One might ask why is this so in this community? From the time spent on the field, it was realized that women in Ashiaman were more open to facing these challenges due to the help they received from some male counterparts who believed in the need to present women with the opportunity to represent themselves on the local level. This gesture by the men was rather peculiar as it has been noted that men will rather not be lead by women, thus oppose the idea of women in leadership. Also the work of NGOs and groups like AWPD attributed to the contrast in these two neighborhoods as women in Ashiaman are well exposed to leadership training, human rights issues, political accountability and the support of and encouragement of some female colleagues who have come to understand the need for the representation of women on the local and national level despite the challenges that come with it.

#### **4.4.4 Political discrimination**

Women over the decades have been discriminated against mostly on the political levels with the reason being women should be seen and not heard, this is due to cultural ideologies that emphasize gender roles. Political parties discriminate against women by including them only in the minuscule sections, certain positions are deemed as not female worthy. These political parties have various roles but only the female organizer is the sport left for females and the rest for males. Women have to contest to the teeth for such positions but are denied despite their competence. Those who suffer the most discrimination and criticism are younger candidates, single mothers, and unmarried women who are viewed as ambitious and referred to as sluts who sleep their way through to getting a position or achieving a political career.

But women are climbing up the educational and economic ladders while demanding accountability from their leaders. We are no longer in the age where females sat back and watched their male counterparts make all the decisions without question. All over the world, from the grassroots to the highest form of governance there has been campaigns of new policies that are female inclusive and empowering in order to change the narrative that depicts we are in a “man’s world” and therefore the man should be at the forefront and “women the housewives and child bearers”. A political leader had this to say:

“These men always perceive women as feeble and incompetent. Even though I have attained a position in the NDC some male counterparts always try to shut me up during talk shows at the radio stations all because I am a woman with nothing sensible to say. But I fight my way through it all the time and have to prove my competence. It gets difficult most at times but then again I am a strong woman who knows my rights and what I stand for.”

Participant interview



#### **4.4.5 Other constraints of women in slum areas**

Even though women were faced with funding issues and labeling by the society, it was gathered they also faced with the responsibility of catering for their families single-handedly as some were divorced, single parents or widowhood making the venture into politics difficult. For others, the denunciation of the idea by their families and husbands served as boundaries to build their political careers. It was realized being a leader of an association was permitted by most husbands and parents but the advancement into local or national politics was rejected. With the diverse cultures and ethnic groups, language became problematic for those who could not speak the most common native language “*twi*” or English as they could not interact with community people, therefore, dissuading them from aspiring for positions.

#### **4.5 Education/Gendered awareness**

In relation to the study, it was realized education played a major role in the empowerment of women in both slums. With the rise of the AWDP in Ashaiman, awareness was created enlightening women and pushing them to voice out their opinions as compared to Old Fadama. The AWPDP started off around 2005/2006 as a platform for the mobilization of women to participate in the decision-making process pertaining to the affairs of the community but later incorporated the need to educate women on their rights and provide economic training. The British Council had funding available to support empowerment programs relative to women, the leaders of the group attained some of the funding to push the vision of the AWDP. To my surprise, the initiative was much more male than woman-oriented, since some male political advocates saw the need to encourage and push women to partake of the decision-making process and be exposed to the political arena as it is not just a male-dominated area but also an avenue for females to express their needs and opinions. An external organization is known as IBIS now merged with Oxfam demanded accountability and monitoring at the early stages of the group due to the resources they invested in its programs.

The association addresses issues relating to women both economically and politically. The association offers leadership training, public speaking skills, education on human rights, political accountability awareness, entrepreneurial opportunities and vocational skills such as soap making, basketry, bead making, hairdressing, shampoo making, computer training, market sales, accounting *“tire and dye”*. The platform has enriched the lives of these women as it has provided them with a source of income and education on some matters which they lacked, enabling them to be self-sufficient and neoteric with the century they leave in. Leaving in a slum settlement nevertheless has been labeled to harbor criminals and underprivileged individuals, but the AWPDP has managed to resolve the topic of women being the most destitute in a slum settlement since the livelihoods of the respondents in question are evolving day in day out. Data collected proved 10 women took a chance and participated in leadership positions in 2009/2010, the first in the history of the community, out of this 2 emerged victors in the positions contested for, with 1 becoming the Council of State Member under deceased Ex-President John Atta Mills. A participant had this to say:

“Joining the AWDP has broadened my views on several matters both politically and economically, it provided me access to the Ghana Beauticians and Hairdressers Association, GHABHA. Initially, I had no idea of the existence of this association, it has helped me know my rights in my line of work especially in relation to paying certain taxes, learning new skills that spring up and registering my little shop. As a member of the AWPDP, I have brushed up my computer skills and learned a lot about human rights especially pertaining to the female sex, this knowledge came in handy when a friend confided in me about the abuses she was facing in her relationship, I encouraged her to report the incident to the police, educated and assisted her to get out of the toxic relationship instead of staying like is mostly done. Another also disclosed to me the father of her child was unwilling to care for the baby, we reported the matter

to the police who aided us in getting the man to provide a monthly fee to help the mother out with the experiences of the child.”

Participant interview

However, the association seems to have fallen short in bridging the gap between the inclusion of females between the ages 15 and 21 in its empowerment and development programs with the excuse of they being in school, therefore, need to concentrate on their studies. I strongly believe this gap should be closed and the age group mentioned must be involved in these activities to better equip them to serve as the next generation’s political and economic advocates, as the saying goes ‘catch them young and they shall be yours forever’, some mindsets are difficult to break from especially after embracing adulthood, therefore their young minds can be shaped to view the society they live in inversely, to question the patriarchal system while advocating for change.

I believe this was as a result of education and living circumstances, these girls are in school most of time and are unable to participate in these meetings also during vacations while helping their parents in their line of trade others pass time by engaging in petty trade as well as finding a job or internship in order to raise money for the coming semester. The organization in order to close the gap can very well meet up with these young women in smaller groups by offering mentorship programs and discussing times they feel will work best for them, so an alternate branch can be created to cater for their needs until their tertiary education to aid them smoothly transit into the main branch without difficulty. Also, the President of the Association stressed that membership is free but attendance is low as most women find it difficult to attend meetings because of the distance between their homes, workplaces and meeting location. However, these women do make it a point to show up for the diverse training sections that go on even though there has been the request for funding to enable them to start up or expand their business.

#### **4.5.1 Affirmative Action by men**

Nonetheless, politics has been affirmed to be a man's world with our society alleged as patriarchal with defined gender roles for both the male and female, but the study showed a reverse by way of males encouraging their counterparts in these areas to embark in the discipline to have their voices heard whiles fighting for equal rights to participate in the decision-making process locally and nationally. All the same not all men in the communities are in support of the notion of having females as leaders, then again the few that hold this opinion are creating the awareness and building platforms to educate their colleagues and the opposite sex as well as providing resources as best as they can in aiding women interested in running for leadership positions. A participant had this to say:

“I have been in the community for a long time and have seen how men have opposed the need to educate women in political and other issues because they have the perception that, once their wives, daughters, and sisters become exposed to such education their lifestyles change and they become disrespectful and pompous. A male friend was actually against his wife being exposed to the political arena and aspire for a position after much interaction and education he approved and was later appreciative for how refined his wife had become. I also remember the effort myself and some other males put into supporting some women that decided to run for office, we took care of the posters, shirts and other materials that were needed for the campaign as well as mobilizing the community to inform the people of the vision she had in mind for the neighborhood.”

Political Activist interview

The Ashaiman community practices the traditional rule of law as a way of paying homage to the land and first settlers. The traditional council though full of men understood the prerequisite to include the need to have females on the councils by having an acting Queen mother to address women issues and needs particularly in settling disputes since the

traditional council practices the arbitrary system of settling disagreements between individuals. In some cases, a dispute between two women has settled the traditional court in the presence or absence of the Queenmother whereas in other circumstances the issues were resolved by the Queen-mother. According to the chiefs and traditional elders, it was essential to the growth of the town to enstool a Queenmother but since there was none, an acting Queenmother was obligatory due to the ever-changing scenes in the society with the rise of the feminist movement to address matters that pertained to the female sex as well as serve as motivation for other women to rise up to the cause of taking leadership positions.

#### **4.5.2 The contribution of non-governmental agencies**

Non-governmental groups have been known to be of much assistance in dealing with matters socially, politically, economically, culturally, environmentally and economically that affect human life as well as the ecosystem. According to Investopedia a “Non-Governmental organization is a non-profit citizen-based group that functions independently of government. NGOs, sometimes called civil societies, are organized on community, national and international levels to serve specific social or political purposes, and are cooperative, rather than commercial, in nature. (Investopedia)” This existence of such groups in both slum settlements seems to improve the life of the people and surroundings. Groups like WISE-women in slum areas, IBIS, RUWACDA-Northern Region Women, and Child Development, Oxfam and others contribute the education and ratification of slum areas. In Ashiaman a building project was undertaken with the help of members in one part of the community who contributed to constructing an apartment complex to house individuals, an initiative by the women in that neighborhood in collaboration with a Non-Governmental organization, the strategy somehow backfired due to poor accountability, evaluation, and monitoring methods. Though it provided shelter for almost half of the community the others were left without proper housing.

The same goes for the AWPD which worked with IBIS now merged with Oxfam to assist with educational programs as well as demand accountability from the association's leaders for checks and balances and was also funded by the British Council in the beginning stages of the association. Likewise, SEND-Ghana who is working to promote good governance and equality of men and women in small communities and the nation as a whole. The organization works in Ashiaman to promote pro-poor policies that favor women and children. During the eviction of inhabitants from Old Fadama, the community in partnership with some local and international organizations fought for the continued existence of the community as it was considered an infringement on the rights of persons living in such areas. With this support, the slum unions and OFADA-Old Fadama Development Association was formed to tackle and deal with developmental, environmental and eviction matters.

Globally there is the presence of Non-Governmental Organizations and Non-Profit working in slum areas to provide support to individuals in the settlements. Some of the aid has been to provide all sort of skills to serve as a coping strategy to aid finance their stay and living expenditure as they readjust to urban life. As others like Slum Dwellers International (SDI) are fighting against the eviction of these settlers to provide them with a sense of housing security. An instance is the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in India which helps to provide settlers with better housing facilities in the poor urban settlements in the country. Likewise, others are serving as credit facilities that provide loans and credit with little or no interest rates to these individuals without taking high ended collateral like properties which will be difficult for slum settlers to provide as well as hinder their progress in pursuing an education or economic venture. Food security has also become a growing concern as poverty is associated with slum areas, therefore, having access to three meals a day is problematic in some slums, Global giving is one of such organization whose mission is to provide food to such low-income community.

These organizations over the years have worked with numerous grassroots organization and community leaders in the community to aid their work and transition in the areas a smooth one since they know the people and neighborhood better. AWPD is one of such grassroots organization that acquired funding from the British Embassy to first kick start it's great to work in the community as it joined hands with IBIS who monitored and evaluated their work and projects in the community to empower the women in Ashiaman. Education and health is another area that is widely worked on by NGO's as they say education is key to knowledge acquisition which none should be denied, whether formal, informal or vocational. Slumaid has over the years helped educate people in slum areas by building schools alongside providing medical support by building health facilities to empower these people, for without good health how does one go on living to apply the knowledge they have acquired. There are always sanitation issues that need attention to the process of slum development since environmental and sanitation needs have to be met and dealt with. An instance, is where "UNICEF funded Slum Improvement Project (SIP) in collaboration with IGED attempts to ameliorate the slum environment through infrastructure development, cleaning footpaths, drains and latrines, primary health care, credit provision, community participation, increasing awareness, and women empowerment (Habib 2009)" as a way of improving the living conditions of the inhabitants in the community.

With all the tremendous work that is exhibited by such organizations, funding is and has always been a problem since there is a growing number of NGO's springing every day to tackle new or the same issues, seeking monetary help from donors and philanthropist has become quite challenging limiting the work that is and can be done in improving the lives of these individuals. Yet with all the obstacles, the awareness of the women being part of the decision making is being achieved as women are rising up to the task both in and outside slum settlements.

### **4.5.3 Importance of Networks**

Network building in the century we find ourselves puts a great necessity on this that it has essentially become impossible to escape since our daily lives revolve around it especially with career expansion. Women in these settlements have strong social networks partly due to their participation and involvement in some of these associations such as the market women's association, traders' associations, hairdressers' associations, porters' associations, AWPDP, credit union groups, teacher associations, keep-fit groups, and youth groups. The results from the study proposed women relied to some extent on the support of their colleagues in their various associations for support economically and somewhat politically. These networks boosted the knowledge, skills, and returns on the businesses they were engaged in. Also, the privileges an individual enjoys as a member of an association includes presenting them with a voice locally and nationally specifically in dealing with policies and external threats that affect their businesses and every now and then socially. An instance was when the Ashiaman market women association attacked the Member of Parliament for failing to honor his promise of reconstructing the market to a safe environment for trade. Another instance is how the women's tomatoes association to fight for the importation and exportation of tomatoes as well as prices of their commodities as it periodically affects the sales and income of the trade.

Candidates in Ashaiman that embarked on the leadership roles reported though it was not easy since the society opposed the idea of female leaders, nevertheless the women from the association extend their support as well as votes. Who you fraternize with goes a mile to keep you in the game, it impacts an individual's influence in the community as well as increasing votes. A member of the AWPDP had this to say:

“My political career began back during my undergraduate days, then a polling station agent as well as several leadership roles. I built my networks during this period because in politics it really matters. It helped serve as a base for my foundation when I finally decided to aspire for a position in one of the political parties nationally, my



older experiences was of aid during the difficult times, also through my networks, I was able to meet important people in our nation that became an asset to my campaign.”

Political Aspirant interview

#### **4.6 Achievements of Women Leaders**

Women in specific roles have proven themselves worthy of their position but are still somewhat criticized by their colleagues and the opposite sex. Most of these leaders are in the Assembly, political party or ethnic leadership have achieved a quite a number of things. The Assemblywoman for Zone 1 and Zone 2 alongside others in Ashaiman asserted she had aided in the construction of a basketball court of the youth of the community since it lacks one, assisted with the provision of 57 light poles for electricity, construction of drainage systems in the community to decrease flooding and check the flow of water and fluids in the neighborhood, not to mention the reconstruction of pipelines to solve water scarcity problem the community was facing.

“whiles embarking on my campaign community members complained about the scarcity of water in the region due to the destruction of pipelines, I promised to resolve the problem when voted into power, per my promise I visited the Ghana Water Works for the area to find enquire what was going on. Apparently, they just needed my signature and letterhead to issue a reconstruction of the pipes, solving the water situation. I got to know many of my predecessors had filed complaints about the problem but had never taken the initiative of visiting the office to follow up on the complaints, so I am proud of myself for honoring my promise to the people.”

Political Participant Interview

Furthermore, it was recognized that women who were in these positions motivated others to partake in different roles in the community, for instance, an ex-president of the AWPB became the Queen-mother of the Ewe Association in Ashaiman. Similarly, others rose to unit

committee members and Zonal committee chairperson. The community saw a rise in female aspiration for Assemblywoman positions, likewise, female students have also been influenced by the evolution to aspire for positions on their various campuses despite the stigma that comes with it. Though there are stereotypes and women still face problems in this area they are not afraid to step forward and demand equality.

In Old Fadama, a dissimilar situation as there is little participation of women in leadership roles unless it had to do it grassroots mobilization and organization women are missing on the political arena as that is their preference, but in the tribal groups there is somewhat room for female heads to deal with female issues. However, on the economic fronts, women were their own bosses and leaders in various associations who had the skills and desire to improve fight for policies that influenced their businesses positively rather than negatively.

#### **4.7 Political and Economic Opportunities**

It was realized from the research conducted on the ground that they were multiple opportunities for women to embark into leadership roles as the various associations had positions that provided women the necessary experience and skills to venture into political roles. From the stories gathered most started the political journey back in school or in being a polling agent at one point in their life and developed gradually to their current positions. To believe, slums settlements are only full of criminals and poverty-stricken people with no prospects is an inaccurate and bias especially in the case of women as their participation in the decision-making process is evolving periodically. From the rise of market Queenmothers, association leaders to ethnic Queenmothers, women are actively changing the status quo with their active engagement in policies that affect their livelihoods not to mention the demand of accountability from political leaders.

Securing a job in these communities internally and externally can be difficult most times as employers outside of the environs as persons from these environs are considered to be criminals who will collapse their businesses. Moreover, family ties and social networks in the

neighborhood come of aid in securing a job as incoming migrants are normally put in the same line of work as friends or relations, in order cases, ethnic chiefs in the community can recommend and guide new migrants on economic ventures to venture into along with people to work with or learn a trade. Upon learning trade individuals secure loans from their friends, relations or local credit union -“*susu collector*” to start a business. Correspondingly some resettled in the community with some handiwork and therefore borrowed money or got a loan to restart their trade. This sometimes started very little but through hard work and good social networks, expansions were made possible. These opportunities proved women were not as marginalized as it is avowed to be.

#### **4.8 Maintenance of Law and Order**

Slum settlements are known for its notorious livelihood and often referred to as dangerous and a haven for criminals and vagabonds. Throughout several studies conducted on slums, urban people and the government have called for the eviction and removal of these settlements. In the Accra suburb, many citizens dread to venture into these two neighborhood for fear of their belonging being snatched right from their hands. In Ashaiman participants urged crime had decreased as compared to the early 1990s where killing was more of a game of fighting to the finish or death. Robberies have likewise, decreased due to the education and economic opportunities available to the communal people especially the youth. The breakout of the internet and maintenance of law and order by law enforcement agents increased cybercrime unintentionally, where youngsters are now committing crimes via the internet. From resources, assembled crime however in Old Fadama is on a different scale as the settlement somewhat lacks a proper hierarchy of authority, inhabitants do as they desire with little or no respect for the law enforcement agency as they can offer bribes to be released if reported or captured. According to a participant

“over here, we do not leave our belongings laying about otherwise they are taken by the second owner “thieves”. Even when we wash we have to stay home and watch

them dry before attending to anything else or else we will have to go and buy them again from the thieves. Yes, we do report such incidents to the police but the offenders are allowed to go free after paying something to them, so now we protect what is ours instead time to report after they have been stolen.”

Participant Interview

## **Chapter 5**

### **Empirical and theoretical contribution**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Historically it has been proven by literature and research that women equally dominated and competent as men in handling certain societal roles. Colonialism is the catalyst for the gender gap and stereotypes we see in our society today with political representation and women's rights being at the head of the pedestal. In slum areas, the view is somewhat the same as women are termed marginalized, vulnerable and poverty-stricken. To challenge these assertions, the study looks at the socio-economic livelihoods of women in slum settlements..... this chapter embodies the empirical and theoretical contribution of the study to the society and policy implications that increase or decrease the participation of these women in the decision-making process.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

Generally, it was gathered that women in poor urban settlements have the opportunity of exercising their leadership skills and participate in the decision-making process but are reluctant to do due to our cultural setting and ideologies while others are embarking on political careers with the assistance of some males in the community. It was realized education, non-governmental aid and the advocacy for women in leadership roles played a major role in changing the status quo in one community as compared to the other despite the challenges and social stigma that come with it specifically in reference to politics. Furthermore, women are engaged in prosperous businesses that enable them to be self-sufficient, not forgetting the large networks that aid in the accomplishment of this.

#### **5.3 Theoretical Contribution**

This study debunked notations like that express the susceptibilities of women that been presented and labeled as marginalized, vulnerable and with no sense of security. From the data collected, I believe the perception of the media, academia, and individuals foreign to a slum neighborhood will begin to look at the subject matter in a whole different concept. In

recent times when feminism is on the rise and the empowerment of women is the new phenomenon and women entering into politics and business as well as other domineering fields, has provided the facts to why it is necessary women are inclusive in the decision-making process while describing the influence they have in their various communities not forgetting the challenges they also face, in addition to reshaping gendered and feminist studies as well as poor urban settlement studies.

#### **5.4 Policy implication**

In terms of policy making, governments and leaders will better understand the needs and lives of these women from this research to propose policies that will not exclude them in leadership roles but address their needs such as the access to resources, housing security, health access and also economic policies that help them in their entrepreneurial ventures.

Moreover, their various roles assigned to women in political parties need to be increased to aid women discover and nurture the political potential. The media and patriarchal mindset of the nation and male leaders need to be changed by revisiting history and celebrating heroines of old as well as teaching the younger generation of these past stories and account to change their perception on certain gender roles and norms, the woman's place is no more in the kitchen but at the frontlines of political and economic affairs.

In order to grow as a nation and achieve equality, there must be a fair representation of women in all institutions both at the local and national level without discrimination to gender, marital status, funding, ethnic groups they belong, financial and educational level.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Interview Guide**

1. What is your role or position in the community?
2. How often do you participate in the decision-making process of issues concerning the community?
3. Do you have access to leadership opportunities?
4. What political party do you belong to and do you have access to your leaders?
5. How active are you in the political affairs in your community?
6. What active economic or political movements do you belong to and how did you find yourself in these groups?
7. How has your association with this group influenced your livelihood?
8. What are the economic opportunities in this neighborhood?
9. Have you invested or acquired any property as a result of your occupation?
10. How has your community affected your socio-economic livelihood or welfare?
11. Who do you report concerns or problems too?
12. What social relations or networks do you interact with?
13. What is the hierarchy of power relations in your neighborhood?